

HB 279 -- Public Assistance Benefits

Sponsor: Hinson

This bill specifies that a recipient of state Temporary Assistance for Need Families (TANF) benefits who is found to have made a cash withdrawal at any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment with an electronic benefit transfer transaction, after an administrative hearing conducted by the Department of Social Services, must be declared ineligible for benefits for three years from the date of the administrative hearing decision. Other members of the household who remain eligible must continue to receive TANF benefits as protective or vendor payments to a third-party payee. Any person who, in good faith, reports a suspected violation cannot be held civilly or criminally liable for reporting the suspected violation.

The Department of Social Services is required to implement and maintain policies and practices in accordance with specified federal regulations that prevent a TANF electronic benefit transaction in any liquor store, casino, gambling casino, gambling establishment, or any retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

The department is required to ensure that recipients of TANF have access to using or withdrawing TANF benefits with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and charges that apply to electronic benefit transactions involving TANF benefits and that the information is made publicly available.

On or before December 31, 2014, the department must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly detailing the policies and practices implemented in accordance with these provisions and specified federal requirements. The department must report Missouri's implementation of the policies and practices to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services as required under federal rule within two years of the enactment of the federal law.